



## City of Takoma Park Press Release

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### For Immediate Release

### **Takoma Park City Council adopted the 2019-2030 Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan through Resolution #2019-47**

**City of Takoma Park, MD – (October 18, 2019)** On Wednesday, October 16, the Takoma Park City Council adopted the [2019-2030 Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan](#) through [Resolution #2019-47](#). This Plan positions the City to set affordable housing goals that complement the work of the Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the Montgomery County Council and take advantage of new funding and investment opportunities, while considering every action through a race equity lens and taking into account climate change resiliency needs.

Mayor Kate Stewart commented, “When we have stable, high quality housing available for all, families thrive and our community succeeds. On Wednesday night, the City took the critical and necessary steps to work toward the realization of the human right to safe, high quality, and affordable housing and the interrelated right to an adequate standard of living.”

As the City looks to meet its critical housing needs, housing development initiatives are interlaced with the City’s economic development initiatives, particularly in light of the positive and negative challenges of the coming Purple Line light rail line, the recent closing of the community’s hospital in the heart of the city, and changing regional market forces.

The themes of the Strategic Plan are:

- Preserve existing businesses and affordable housing in Takoma Park, including in revitalizing areas
- Produce more housing and opportunities for businesses to start and grow across the income spectrum and in neighborhoods across the City to meet the diverse housing and economic needs
- Protect renters, homeowners, and local businesses from discrimination and displacement; and protect our environment from destruction.

The City of Takoma Park is unique in that it has a strong rent stabilization program that has kept its rental housing rates low. With rental units making up approximately half of the City's housing units, Takoma Park provides a large percentage of Montgomery County's affordable rental housing stock. However, single family home prices in Takoma Park have been rising and there has been almost no new residential or commercial construction in Takoma Park in 50 years.

Residents looking for townhouses, accessible housing appropriate for multi-generational families, shared housing, housing for adults with special needs, or simply updated apartments, cannot find those units in Takoma Park at this time. And, strategies to allow aging residents to remain in Takoma Park have been needed. This Plan provides the framework to begin to meet these needs.

New construction as part of economic development efforts spurred by the Purple Line can help address the City's housing and business needs while also improving the appearance and walkability of New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard. Redevelopment of the site of the former Washington Adventist Hospital could help meet community needs in the areas of education, health care and housing.

Councilmember Talisha Searcy, representing the area closest to the Purple Line construction, noted, "The Housing and Economic Strategic Plan establishes the foundation upon which the City can build a thriving community that meets the needs of current and future residents and businesses. The world around us is changing. With the Purple Line and other major projects, such as the redevelopment of the Takoma Park Recreation Center, this document is critical to ensuring that the City is proactive in addressing changing demands and capitalizing on new opportunities."

While zoning for redevelopment near the Purple Line is in place, zoning changes will be required for areas on and near the hospital site. Montgomery County has master plan and zoning authority for land in Takoma Park. The passing of the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan provides direction as County zoning changes are pursued and considered.

The Plan will be particularly important in taking advantage of the State-designated Opportunity Zone in Takoma Park. The Zone covers the area along New Hampshire Avenue near the Purple Line. This area is also an Enterprise Zone. Having the goals and strategies in place will help advance the redevelopment of the Takoma Park Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue, as well as other commercial properties in the Takoma Langley Crossroads area.

Takoma Park's Economic Development Manager Samira Cook Gaines summarized, "The Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan is an exciting leap forward for Takoma Park. It sets the stage for new partnerships and opportunities for growth and equity for our residents and businesses. I look forward to working with the community and our neighboring jurisdictions to create a thriving, creative, and equitable city for all Takoma Park residents."

Now that the Plan has been adopted, implementation steps and metrics will be refined by staff. Over the next four months, the Council will act to implement a number of the key strategies, including adoption of housing targets consistent with those adopted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and those that may be considered by Montgomery County.